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Security Council

Sixty-fourth year

Provisional

6091st meeting

Tuesday, 10 March 2009, 3 p.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Dabbashi	(Libyan Arab Jamahiriya)
Members:	Austria	Mr. Mayr-Harting
	Burkina Faso	Mr. Kafando
	China	Mr. Liu Zhenmin
	Costa Rica	Mr. Urbina
	Croatia	Mr. Vilović
	France	Mr. Ripert
	Japan	Mr. Takasu
	Mexico	Mr. Heller
	Russian Federation	Mr. Safronkov
	Turkey	Mr. İlkin
	Uganda	Mr. Rugunda
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Quarrey
	United States of America	Ms. DiCarlo
	Viet Nam	Mr. Hoang Chi Trung

Agenda

The situation in the Central African Republic

Letter dated 3 March 2009 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2009/128)

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09-26011 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Central African Republic

Letter dated 3 March 2009 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2009/128)

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter from the representative of the Central African Republic, in which he requests to be invited to participate in the consideration of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite that representative to participate in the consideration of the item, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Poukré-Kono (Central African Republic) took a seat at the Council table.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. François Lonseny Fall, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and head of the United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office in the Central African Republic.

It is so decided.

I invite Mr. Fall to take a seat at the Council table.

In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to His Excellency Mr. Jan Grauls, Chair of the Central African Republic configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission and Permanent Representative of Belgium.

It is so decided.

I invite Mr. Grauls to take a seat at the Council table.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Security Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2009/128, which contains a letter dated 3 March 2009 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council.

At this meeting, the Security Council will hear briefings by Mr. François Lonseny Fall, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and head of the United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office in the Central African Republic, as well as His Excellency Mr. Jan Grauls, Chair of the Central African Republic configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission and Permanent Representative of Belgium.

As this is Mr. Fall's last briefing to the Council in his current capacity as Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Central African Republic, I wish, on behalf of Council members, to thank him for his tireless efforts in helping to stabilize the situation in the Central African Republic. In doing so, Mr. Fall played an important role in bringing the Government of the Central African Republic and the rebels to the December 2008 inclusive political dialogue, which led to the signing of the peace agreements. May I, together with the other members of the Council, wish him continued success in his future undertakings.

I now give the floor to Mr. Fall.

Mr. Fall: As members know, since my last briefing to the Security Council on the Central African Republic on 2 December 2008 (see S/PV.6027), an inclusive political dialogue was successfully held, from 8 to 20 December 2008.

The dialogue was the result of tremendous efforts over the past two years by national stakeholders, supported by their international partners, including the United Nations, the African Union, the Economic Community of Central African States, the Central African Economic and Monetary Community, the International Organization of la Francophonie and the Community of Sahelo-Saharan States. The dialogue brought together around 150 participants from the Government, pro-President political parties, opposition and moderate political parties, rebel movements and civil society. Former President Ange-Félix Patassé, as well as a number of other exiled political actors,

participated in the dialogue. It was chaired by the former President of Burundi, Pierre Buyoya.

Three committees were established, which covered political and governance questions; security and politico-military movements, including rebel groups; and socio-economic questions. While the security and socio-economic committees worked according to developed blueprints — which came in the form of a national security-sector-reform plan of action, developed approximately eight months earlier, and a Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, finalized a year before — the political and governance committee had to deal with the most contentious issues. These included the legitimacy of the current regime, which came to power through a coup d'état in 2003 and was legitimized in the contested elections of 2005, as well as ways to include in the governance of the country all political actors who had influence there.

At the end of the 12-day-long discussions, a number of important agreements were reached. In the political and governance area, they included: the establishment of a broad-based Government, including all the entities that participated in the inclusive political dialogue, to implement the outcomes of the dialogue and prepare for the 2009 and 2010 municipal, legislative and presidential elections; the commitment to hold municipal, legislative and presidential elections in 2009 and 2010; the revision of the electoral code and the establishment of an independent electoral commission; the conducting of independent audits of revenue-generating State institutions; and the establishment of mechanisms to promote permanent dialogue among the country's political and social actors.

In the area of security and armed groups, the agreements reached during the dialogue included: the implementation of security sector reform in accordance with the plan of action developed during the national security sector reform seminar in April 2008; the restructuring of the national armed forces; an immediate disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) programme; combating the proliferation of small arms; and the introduction of measures to identify and indemnify victims of past conflicts.

In the socio-economic area, the agreements included: the implementation of the poverty reduction strategy for the period 2008-2011; the reform of public finances; the reform of the management of natural resources; and the development of national human resources.

(*spoke in French*)

As members can see, the recommendations of the dialogue cover a broad range of issues. That reflects the national vision of putting an end to conflict in the Central African Republic. I am pleased to see that the dialogue's conclusions are at the centre of an integrated peacebuilding framework such as that being developed by the Peacebuilding Commission.

I wish to emphasize that there have been other positive developments since the conclusion of the dialogue. A new, inclusive Government was established in January. The steering committee responsible for DDR, which is currently operational, has already engaged the rebel movements with a view to the possible implementation of a DDR programme. It is envisaged that rebel groups will submit their respective combatant lists by 15 March. A dialogue follow-up committee has been established and is scheduled to begin its work, with the participation of a number of international organizations, including the United Nations, the African Union, the European Commission, the Economic Community of Central African States, the International Organization of la Francophonie, the Community of Sahelo-Saharan States and the Central African Economic and Monetary Community (CEMAC).

However, the progress made thus far is precarious owing to the deterioration in the security situation in various localities in the Nana-Gribizi and Bamingui-Bangoran prefectures, in the north of the country. Those localities recently saw intensive fighting and some very bold attacks against governmental institutions and military facilities in Ndélé, Markunda, Bossembélé and Batangafo. Last week, riots erupted in several neighbourhoods of Bangui following an attack carried out against a chief of police by elements of the presidential guard.

The increase in the number of security incidents in the north of the country has been attributed to a rebel group unknown until now, called the Convergence des patriots centrafricains pour la Justice et la Paix (CPJP), and Abdoulaye Miskine's rebel group, the Front démocratique du peuple centrafricain. Both movements have issued press releases claiming responsibility for these attacks. They have also accused the Central African Government of reneging on its commitments concerning the implementation of the

dialogue's recommendations and have threatened to join their forces to resume armed combat. It is important to note that former Minister Charles Massi has resurfaced as Assistant Coordinator General of the Political Council of the CPJP.

Despite those setbacks, the prospects for stabilization of the Central African Republic offered by the dialogue remain solid. The dialogue provides a new opportunity to take significant steps towards sustainable peacebuilding in the Central African Republic. Here, it should be noted that Central African actors have stressed the need for support from the international community as they try to implement the recommendations of the dialogue. In that connection, it is encouraging to note that a number of the Central African Republic's bilateral and multilateral partners have already responded positively to that request for support. I welcomed CEMAC's decision to contribute 8 billion Central African francs — approximately $16 million — towards the DDR process in the Central African Republic.

In that context, and as members will have noted in the letter of the Secretary-General dated 3 March 2009 addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2009/128), the United Nations intends to review its presence on the ground in order to provide more consistent and better coordinated support for the implementation of the dialogue's recommendations. Such a coordinated presence will undoubtedly help to strengthen the efforts to stabilize the Central African Republic.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank Mr. Fall for his briefing.

I now give the floor to His Excellency Ambassador Jan Grauls.

Mr. Grauls (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I should like to thank you, Mr. President, for having given me the opportunity to address the Council in my capacity as Chair of the Central African Republic configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission.

The Central African Republic was included in the Commission's agenda in June 2008, at a very appropriate time. Since then, over the past eight months, the configuration has systematically encouraged and supported the considerable progress that the Central African Republic has made in the area of peacebuilding and stabilization. The inclusive political dialogue, which was held in Bangui last December and which brought together representatives of the entire political class and all of Central African society, as well as the positive results achieved, had been virtually inconceivable last June.

The recommendations of the inclusive political dialogue have begun to be implemented. Indeed, a broad-based Government has been established, including members of the political opposition and former rebels. A steering committee has been formed for the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) process, and an Independent Electoral Commission has been created to prepare the 2009 and 2010 municipal, legislative and presidential elections. Those steps attest to the genuine desire of all parties concerned to work in a new atmosphere of peace and understanding. After decades of internal tension and a dramatic deterioration in living conditions, the population of the Central African Republic yearned for such developments.

The Strategic Framework for Peacebuilding in the Central African Republic will very soon be finalized and will serve as the basis for long-term engagement between the Central African Republic and the international community. That framework was formulated in close cooperation with all national parties in the Central African Republic and thus enjoys broad national ownership.

However, several major challenges remain, and the Peacebuilding Commission recalled them in a statement that was made public today. The first challenge is security. The resurgence of violence in the north of the country has led in recent weeks to a new displacement of thousands of civilians and gives rise to great concern. That is why it is important to ask all parties to show restraint and avoid reprisals. That is why it is also important to urgently meet the needs of the thousands of civilians displaced and affected by this conflict.

While the first challenge lies in the field of security, the second is political. Given these alarming developments, the Peacebuilding Commission encourages all parties that participated in the inclusive political dialogue to implement as quickly as possible and in a spirit of reconciliation the recommendations resulting from that dialogue. The Commission calls on all political-military groups, in particular the Front démocratique du peuple centrafricain, to adhere to the Libreville Comprehensive Peace Agreement and to become involved in implementing the recommendations of the inclusive political dialogue.

The Peacebuilding Commission believes that the most critical step to preserve the momentum of the inclusive political dialogue is the finalization and implementation of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) programme. However, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), which is responsible for drawing up that programme, cannot finalize the programme document within every political-military group provides a complete list of its combatants. The initial deadline for submitting those lists was 25 February. It has already been postponed to 16 March. At this stage, no further reports can or should be accepted. We cannot waste any more time.

With regard to the financing of the disarmament, DDR process, it is necessary to raise the awareness of the international partners to the urgency of pledging funds to the trust fund that will be set up by the UNDP. Once the DDR programme document has been finalized, the remaining balance of the funds already allocated to the Central African Republic by the Peacebuilding Fund could quickly be available for DDR. On 30 January in Libreville, 8 billion CFA francs were also pledged by the Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa to finance DDR activities in the Central African Republic. We call on the Government of the Central African Republic and UNDP to finalize arrangements to transfer those funds to the UNDP trust fund as soon as possible.

The third challenge is economic. Like other countries in the region, the Central African Republic is particularly affected by the consequences of the world economic crisis. The Peacebuilding Commission is committed, together with the international financial institutions, to seeking mechanisms to respond to those impacts that affect a Central African population that is already very weak.

As Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission country-specific configuration, I advocate the establishment of an United Nations integrated mission in the Central African Republic. Moreover, I welcome the recommendations to that end made by the Secretary-General in his letter of 3 March addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2009/128). A rapid implementation of those recommendations is necessary given the urgent need for a consolidated approach by the United Nations during this crucial phase in the political history of the Central African Republic, which the Secretary-General described as "perhaps the most genuinely inclusive attempt to foster national reconciliation in the Central African Republic to date" (*S/2009/128, p. 2*).

Before concluding, I would like very warmly to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Ambassador François Lonseny Fall, for the outstanding work that he has carried out within the framework of his mandate in the Central African Republic. I wish him success in his future projects. I cherish the hope that his successor be appointed as soon as possible so as to ensure a strong United Nations presence in the field during this pivotal time. In conclusion, I would like to reaffirm the commitment of the Peacebuilding Commission to support the Central African Republic's efforts in national reconciliation and reconstruction.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank Ambassador Grauls for his briefing.

I now give the floor to the representative of the Central African Republic.

Mr. Poukré-Kono (Central African Republic) (*spoke in French*): As this is the first time that the Central African Republic has taken the floor before the Security Council in this month of March, allow me, Sir, to convey to you the most heartfelt brotherly congratulations of the delegation of the Central African Republic. The Libyan Arab Jamahiriya is an integral part of the peace process in the Central African Republic. We welcome that country's enlightened mediation in that process. This meeting, held under your stewardship, will, I am sure, be successful.

We would like to pay well-deserved tribute to the Secretary-General for his efforts with regard to the Central African Republic. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon is following very closely the developing situation in our country. In these past six months, he has not ceased to step up contacts with the highest Central African authorities. His commitment to the full restoration of peace in the Central African Republic is clear to all. Less than four months after the appearance of his report contained in document S/2008/733 of 26 November 2008, where the idea of an integrated office was born, the Council is called on to carry forward that recommendation, which is now before it.

The complexity of the solutions needed to resolve the problem of the Central African Republic following the convening of the inclusive political dialogue can only be organized within the context of an integrated

process, as proposed by the Secretary-General in his letter of 3 March (S/2009/128). The Government of the Central African Republic welcomes the recommendation for the establishment of a United Nations integrated Peacebuilding Office to succeed the current United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office in the Central African Republic until 31 December 2009. We endorse the establishment of that Integrated Office, which is innovative in its integration of the Peacebuilding Support Office into the strategic planning and coordination unit.

The placing of the Central African Republic on the agenda of the Peacebuilding Commission has greatly raised the profile of issues related to our country within international bodies: the United Nations, the African Union, the World Bank, the Central African Economic and Monetary Community and others.

The cooperation between the Peacebuilding Commission and the Government is one of the most exemplary. Once the Strategic Framework for Peacebuilding has been finalized by common agreement, we cherish the hope that efforts towards stabilization and genuine national reconciliation will be achieved. The Integrated Office should play a major role in the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process, which remains the cornerstone on which true political momentum rests. With this new body, the United Nations will be able to speak with a single voice.

We reiterate how pleased we shall be to see the Integrated Office becoming operational as soon as possible in accordance with the recommendation. The Government of the Central African Republic will be happy to work closely with the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General, who will lead this integrated office, as well as with all the agencies of the United Nations system.

I cannot conclude without sympathizing with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, who is leaving his post at a very crucial time in the peace process in the Central African Republic. I wish him every success in his future endeavours.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): There are no further speakers inscribed on my list. In accordance with the understanding reached in the course of the Council's prior consultations, I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 3.40 p.m.